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1976/12/21

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By AT NARA Date 9/24/97SECRET/NODISMEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: Tuesday, December 21, 1976
4:35 p.m. - 5:40 p.m.

PLACE: Secretary Kissinger's Office
Department of State

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Huang Chen,
Chief of PRC Liaison Office
Mr. Tsien Ta Yung,
(Counselor at Liaison Office)
(No. 3 man)
Mr. Hsu Shang-wei,
Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger,
Secretary of State
Mr. Winston Lord,
Director, Policy Planning Staff

Ambassador Huang: Are you busy?

Secretary Kissinger: Am I busy? Well, I'm somewhat busy. I am spending a lot of time with my successor these days. I'm going to invite you in January to come to lunch so that I can introduce you to my successor.

Ambassador Huang: You are old friends. I know that Secretary-designate Vance was Chairman of the Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.

Secretary Kissinger: Right.

Ambassador Huang: You are old friends.

Secretary Kissinger: I have known him for a long time.

Ambassador Huang: About a week ago David Rockefeller paid a visit to me. He wants to go to China.

He talked to me about your relationship.

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Secretary Kissinger: Between David Rockefeller and me?

Ambassador Huang: He talked about his relationship to Vance and Vance's relationship to you.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, we have worked together for a long time.

Ambassador Huang: So that's good. It's easier for you to transfer the work.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, that makes it a lot easier.

Ambassador Huang: As you know Mr. Vance visited China last year as Head of the Delegation of the World Affairs Council.

Secretary Kissinger: He was there just before I was. A number of our Chinese friends referred to his visit when I was there.

Ambassador Huang: He spent more than 3 weeks in China. So you know each other quite well.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, I know him well and I think his basic philosophy will probably be similar to mine.

Ambassador Huang: Also in terms of foreign policy?

Secretary Kissinger: Especially in terms of foreign policy.

In fact I wanted to see you before I left office on a personal basis to tell you of all the things I have done in public life the opening to China is the policy that has been among the most significant. And as one of the co-authors of the Shanghai Communiqué I feel even as a private citizen I will always stand for the implementation of the Shanghai Communiqué and progress for the normalization of our relations.

Ambassador Huang: There have been several months since we met last. The last time we met was when you came to our Liaison Office to pay condolences at the parting of Chairman Mao. During this period United States has held a general election. I can tell you, Mr. Doctor, that

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the situation in China is now excellent. Our Party's Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng has followed Chairman Mao's behest and smashed at one blow the "Gang of Four" and the anti-Party clique. After exposing the interference and disruption of the "Gang of Four", we should even better implement and carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and policy in our foreign affairs. Doctor, you have met the Chairman (Discussion among the Chinese) you have met Chairman Mao 5 times. I can say that no other Foreign Minister has met Chairman Mao so many times. As I know, you have had several long talks with Chairman Mao.

Secretary Kissinger: They were of great importance.

Ambassador Huang: Chairman Mao during these long talks elucidated our position and views on the international situation, Sino/US relations and every major international issue in great detail.

Secretary Kissinger: In great detail and with great profundity.

Ambassador Huang: It proved that there are many common points among us; the most important item is that we join together to cope with the Polar Bear.

Secretary Kissinger: Exactly.

Ambassador Huang: Although Chairman Mao has passed away his revolutionary policy in foreign affairs remains. And in the future we will strictly act accordingly. The revolutionary line and policy formulated by Chairman Mao will never change.

Secretary Kissinger: It's my conviction that the line as we discussed it with Chairman Mao and other Chinese leaders, especially Chairman Mao, about having common interests, especially in relations with the Soviet Union, must be a basic principle of American foreign policy. I will always support this policy and do my best to see to it that it is maintained, and I believe that Secretary Vance will also see matters in a similar light.

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Ambassador Huang: In the last 6, 7, or 8 years, actually we can say that since 1969, Doctor, you have gone through the whole process of the evolution of Sino/US relations. You are quite aware of the background of Sino/US relations.

Secretary Kissinger: I think I have seen every message and every exchange.

Ambassador Huang: And also the commitments made by the US side.

Secretary Kissinger: At least 5 pounds of my over-weight is due to what the Ambassador fed me in Paris.

Ambassador Huang: All of that still remains fresh in my mind. Each friendly meeting is still fresh in my mind. In opening the relationship with the Chinese under the instruction of former President Nixon you have done a lot of work and we are also aware of the role played by you in this.

Secretary Kissinger: And Winston Lord, too.

Ambassador Huang: (pointed toward lord) We had dinner during the last Moon Festival and I talked to Mr. Lord about this.

As you mentioned the Shanghai Communique I would like to say a word. The Chinese side still maintains that so long as all the principles in the Shanghai Communique are strictly observed by both sides, the relationship of our two countries can continue to be improved. Any action which runs counter or goes back on the principles of the Shanghai Communique will lead to severe consequences which the Chinese side will oppose too. As to how the future Sino/US relationship will be, this will not entirely depend on the Chinese side.

And during the past years I have personally been in contact with the Doctor and I am very glad personally to have established a friendship with you. I hope I can also establish a friendly relationship with your successor, Mr. Vance, as good as ours.

Secretary Kissinger: This is why I suggested that perhaps the Ambassador could accept an invitation from me in

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January where I would invite Mr. Vance so I could introduce you. (The Ambassador nods in agreement.)

I believe very strongly that the implementation of the Shanghai Communique strictly on both sides must be the guideline of our policy and I will strongly advise Secretary-designate Vance to do this. And I shall always work in this direction. We must never neglect that relationship or permit any doubt to arise about our commitment to oppose hegemony and work toward normalization of relations. (The Secretary repeats this sentence for the interpreter upon the latter's request.) Our policy must always be one in which we conduct ourselves so that no doubt exists that we oppose hegemony and promote normalization. I think you will find my successor open-minded and committed to improving relations. I personally believe, as I have said on many occasions, that a strong China is an element of stability in the world and of equilibrium.

Ambassador Huang: We learned from the newspapers that not long ago you went to Plains, Georgia.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, I spent about 7 hours with President-elect Carter.

Ambassador Huang: You knew him beforehand?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, I met the President-elect in 1974 when I went to Atlanta and I met him once again in 1975. And then of course I had a very long talk with him when I visited him in Plains, Georgia, which is a very little town in the middle of nowhere.

Ambassador Huang: Seven hours is a long talk.

Secretary Kissinger: He is a very intelligent man. (Not translated.) We reviewed relations with China and I explained to him the origin and our understandings and my conviction that the Soviet Union understands only strength, that one cannot deal with the Soviet Union from weakness. I told him that the most profound analysis of the world situation I generally heard in Peking from Chairman Mao and others, and that he should pay attention to your view of the world situation.

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Ambassador Huang: We learned also from the newspapers that you said to some reporters that the Chinese mean what they say.

Secretary Kissinger: Right. I said that their word counts.

Ambassador Huang: They quoted your sentence.

Secretary Kissinger: Did you notice, however, that I compared what you can believe the Soviets say to what the Chinese say.

Ambassador Huang: Recently there are some people who raise such questions, that maybe Doctor you also heard, they raised such questions to the effect that the United States has already had two Presidents visit China and now it is the Chinese turn to send you their highest leaders to come to the United States. Our reply is clear and simple. Just as Senator Mansfield said clearly, before normalization it is unrealistic to expect the Chinese leaders to come to the United States, because as always we oppose a two-China policy and here in Washington there is still Chiang's so-called Embassy, so of course high leaders could not come here. When your leaders came to China it was not the situation that they could not go to China because there was another American Embassy in Peking. Thus we regularly oppose a two-China policy as a matter of principle. We can not barter away principle.

Secretary Kissinger: Does this apply to every American city or just Washington?

Ambassador Huang: (laughing) As I told you, Mr. Doctor, we always go through the front gate, not the back door.

Secretary Kissinger: I remember we had these discussions a few years ago already and I will be sure to pass on your view to my successor.

What do you think the biggest problem in our relationship will be over the next few years?

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Ambassador Huang: (laughing) Since our late Chairman Mao held several long talks, especially last year in October and December, Chairman Mao has already elaborated on those major issues so I have nothing to add. (Gesturing with his hands) You have talked with Chairman Mao as many as 5 times and in all the long talks Chairman Mao delineated his position and point of view on the international situations, bilateral relations, and also major international issues. Maybe you can tell your successor about these talks for many days.

Secretary Kissinger: You can be sure. We are going to spend several days just on these problems in January. Even after I leave office I will be in contact with various people.

Ambassador Huang: I believe entirely that after you leave this office you will continue to work toward improving relations between our two countries and make your contribution.

Secretary Kissinger: You can be sure that this will be the case.

Ambassador Huang: Recently, Mr. Doctor, you visited Europe and attended the NATO Ministerial Conference. Also you still had several talks about the Middle East situation and also African issues. Is there anything you would like to tell me?

Secretary Kissinger: I think, with regard to NATO, that the relationship between us and the Western European countries has never been better. And there is a realization reflected in the NATO Communique that the defenses of NATO must be strong. And you will see that in the Defense budget for next year which President Ford will submit; it will represent a substantial increase over last year. Unfortunately in Great Britain the economic situation has lead to a slight reduction in defense expenditures but the need to strengthen the defenses of NATO was very well understood by all of my colleagues.

With respect to the Middle East it is my belief that we should begin, and we intend to begin, a peace initiative very soon.

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Ambassador Huang: From your side? The United States would take the initiative?

Secretary Kissinger: The United States should take the initiative and should do it in a manner that doesn't enable the Soviet Union to re-enter the Middle East situation. We believe that Soviet influence has declined in Syria and that therefore we ought to use this opportunity to make fairly rapid progress, or rapid progress, toward peace in the Middle East. I think that this is also the view of the new Administration.

With respect to Africa, quite candidly the Soviet Union is quite active in Southern Africa. The British will make a new initiative on the Rhodesian problem which we will support, and they are sending a mission next week. But that situation is still complicated, and we must all make sure that there is not a repetition of Angola in other places like Rhodesia and Namibia.

How is my old friend Huang Hua? Is he well settled in as Foreign Minister?

Ambassador Huang: He is also an old friend of yours.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, he was there on my first visit at the airport.

Ambassador Huang: You are old friends.

Secretary Kissinger: He is an old friend. So is Marshal Yeh.

Ambassador Huang: (after discussion among the Chinese) You have many friends in China.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I think of them with great warmth.

Ambassador Huang: (smiling) I learned from today's newspaper that there will be a Kissinger office for writing memoirs. This will be a gigantic work.

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Secretary Kissinger: I am scaring everybody half to death.

Ambassador Huang: We can quite imagine that your memoirs will be quite a best seller. We heard that most of your documents will go to the Library of Congress.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, but under restrictions where they cannot be opened. This was the best way to protect them, but they cannot be opened for 25 years.

Ambassador Huang: They will observe these restrictions? Is there a legal background?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, there is a legal contract, a legal document.

Ambassador Huang: There was some previous news reports that part of your papers will be your private papers that you will keep and the other part will go to the public.

Secretary Kissinger: I am giving practically all my papers to the Library of Congress but will not publish any documents.

Ambassador Huang: For example, those records of foreign conversations will also be regarded as formal papers?

Secretary Kissinger: Conversations with foreigners are official papers. They will be treated with the same restrictions as government papers. They will be under exactly the same restrictions as government papers; they will not be available to the public for 25 years and then only if the Department of State agrees to it.

Ambassador Huang: But when you write your memoirs you can use these papers.

Secretary Kissinger: But I cannot quote them.

Ambassador Huang: There are many legal problems.

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Secretary Kissinger: I won't quote them but at least they can refresh my memory.

Ambassador Huang: When will your memoirs be published?

Secretary Kissinger: Quite some time. Many years.

Ambassador Huang: Many years, (in English) How soon?

Secretary Kissinger: Four to 5 years. It's not going to happen next year.

Ambassador Huang: I wish I could read your memoirs earlier.

Secretary Kissinger: They will be very friendly to China. I have been a great admirer of your leaders.

Ambassador Huang: We can quite imagine (laughing). They won't include such problems as the fact that each time you came to my office in Paris you put on 5 pounds of weight.

Secretary Kissinger: That I may describe, but not what we said.

Ambassador Huang: I am very glad once again that I had this opportunity to meet an old friend. I wish you a happy New Year.

Secretary Kissinger: Thank you, the same to you.

Ambassador Huang: Also to your wife.

Secretary Kissinger: I will see you in the New Year with my successor, but if I don't see you alone any more, I want you to know that I have enjoyed working with you.

(There were continued friendly exchanges as the Secretary escorted the Ambassador to the door and Mr. Lord then took the Chinese to the Diplomatic entrance of the State Department.)

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... including the many detailed conversations with you. He even went

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